Mike's bullish on women who are barish

Because I oppose discrimination of any kind, except against people I dislike, I fully support the position taken by a group of women who call themselves the Topfree 10. They call themselves that because they believe that laws prohibiting women from baring their breasts in public are discriminatory.

The women were recently arrested on a beach in Rochester, N.Y., where they had appeared nude from the waist up.

As one of them said, when they went before a judge to enter their pleas: "Because the law is unjust, I plead not guilty."

I agree. I have never understood why a man can go to a beach wearing only a pair of shorts, while a female must cover part of her upper body.

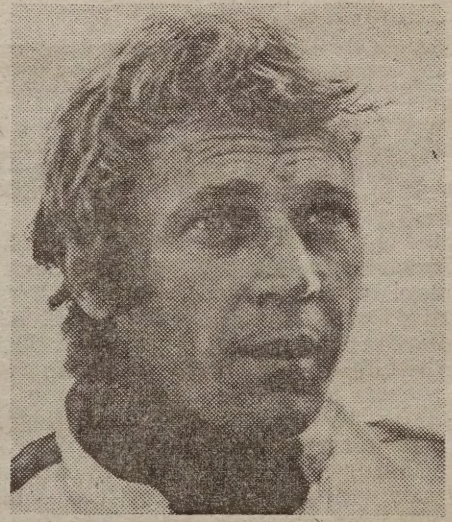
In most cities and states that prohibit women from going topless, the laws say it is indecent exposure or indecent behavior or something of that sort.

When you ask the lawyers what they mean by "indecent", they say that it is something that appeals to our "prurient interests." And prurient, in my dictionary, means: "Having or expressing lustful ideas or desires; tending to excite lust; lascivious; lewd."

What a lot of nonsense. Why is it assumed that the sight of a woman's breasts will arouse lustful ideas or desires? How do the politicians who write these laws know what is in the hearts and minds of men? Apparently they haven't noticed that many, if not most, females don't necessarily have upper bodies that will turn men into salivating beasts. Those who do are already employed as no-name starlets, jiggling and bouncing on the late-night cable movie channels.

So it's possible that many thoughtful men might respond the way the late Steve McQueen did, when he strolled past his swimming pool while his actress wife and another female star were sunbathing on their backs while topless. McQueen said: "Looks like four fried eggs."

And there was the reaction of Walter Matthau, in the movie "New Leaf," when a top-heavy woman, who sought his affections, began to unsnap the upper part of her bathing suit. In a panic, Matthau cried: "Don't let them out!"



Steve McQueen had a clear view

The issue is fairness and equality for women. As the Topfree 10 have pointed out, if a man can bare his chest in public, they should have the same right.

Or, looking at it from another angle, if women must cover up, why shouldn't men be required to do the same?

On any public beach can be found yuppie males, or even older stiffs, who devote long hours at the health club to developing their lats and pecs. Since most of them shuffle paper for a living, they don't need bulging muscles, but they want to strut and flex, hoping to catch the eye of a female as dim-witted as they are.

Who is to say what lewd, lascivious, lustful ideas their twitching lats and pecs arouse in female persons? There is ample evidence that females do have such thoughts. That's why they go to baseball games and cheer loudest for the player they believe has the perkiest bottom.

Actually, while I support the Topfree 10 in principle, I also agree with my friend Slats Grobnik, who has said:

"When I go to a beach and see the way most people look in their skivvies, and I remember that we was taught that man was made in God's image, I always wonder: Does God turn off the light before he takes off his pants?"

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(New York) DAILY NEWS JUNE 30 1989